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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 000992

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP AND EAP/CM, DESK PLEASE PASS TO SENATE ARMED  
SERVICES COMMITTEE/DEPUTY MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR RICHARD  
FONTAINE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/15/2034

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PARM](#) [MNUC](#) [PBTS](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [CH](#)

KN, AF, PK, SO

SUBJECT: CODEL MCCAIN MEETING WITH CHINESE DEFENSE MINISTER  
LIANG GUANGLIE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i.,  
William Weinstein. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: In an April 8 meeting with CODEL  
McCain, Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie  
observed that military-to-military ties lagged  
behind other aspects of the bilateral relationship.  
Liang attributed the shortcoming to three  
"barriers": U.S. arms sales to Taiwan; the National  
Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2000, which  
limits mil-mil cooperation; and U.S. intelligence  
gathering activities in China's Exclusive Economic  
Zone (EEZ). To overcome these barriers, China would  
like to negotiate guiding principles for mil-mil  
relations based on mutual respect, mutual trust,  
equality and mutual benefit. While the recent DPRK  
rocket launch "had an impact on China's national  
security," China viewed the Six-Party Talks as the  
best mechanism to handle the situation. Liang  
agreed with Senator McCain that the PLA Navy anti-  
piracy deployment presented an opportunity to  
improve mil-mil ties and said China "looked  
positively at closer cooperation with the United  
States Navy and others." Liang suggested that the  
PLA would be willing to explore cooperation in  
humanitarian assistance activities with U.S.  
counterparts. End Summary.

12. (U) Participants:

U.S.

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Senator John McCain (R-AZ)  
Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC)  
Senator Amy Klobachar (D-MN)  
Charge William Weinstein  
DATT BG Charles Hooper  
Richard Fontaine, Senate Armed Services Committee  
Deputy Minority Staff Director  
Brooke Buchanan, SEN McCain staff  
Laura Bauld, SEN Graham staff  
Tom Sullivan, SEN Klobuchar staff  
CAPT John Nowell, Mil Escort  
Jim Brown, interpreter  
Mark Lambert, notetaker

Chinese Participants

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Defense Minister Liang Guanglie  
MG Qian Lihua, Director of Foreign Affairs Office  
(FAO), Ministry of National Defense (MND)  
Chen Yonglong, Vice President, Chinese People's  
Institute for Foreign Affairs (CPIFA)  
Li Ji, Director of North American and Oceanian  
Affairs, FAO/MND  
Shen Jun, Deputy Director of North American and  
Oceanian Affairs, MND  
Other MND and PLA officials

#### Military Relationship Lags Behind

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13. (C) In an April 8 meeting with CODEL McCain at the Ministry of National Defense, Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie noted the successful April 1 meeting in London between President Obama and President Hu Jintao and their joint commitment to improve Sino-American relations. "Our relations have entered into an historic, new phase," Liang told the visiting Senators. Liang noted that the two leaders had agreed on the importance of a positive, cooperative and comprehensive relationship and assured Senator McCain that China was committed to improved bilateral relations. However, Liang maintained, Sino-U.S. military-to-military relations lagged behind other aspects of the relationship due to "the American side putting up political, cultural and legal barriers."

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#### Three Barriers to Better Relations

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14. (C) Defense Minister Liang said that three barriers prevented improved mil-mil relations: U.S. arms sales to Taiwan; the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2000, which limits mil-mil cooperation; and U.S. intelligence gathering activities in China's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Liang said that the successful Presidential meeting in London had established the "political preconditions" necessary for improved mil-mil relations and that the PLA valued bilateral relations and was willing to work with the United States to push mil-mil relations forward. As an example, Liang suggested that CNO ADM Roughead's planned attendance at April ceremonies commemorating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the PLA Navy (PLAN) would be successful and would "play a positive role in improving mil-mil ties."

#### PLA Wants "Guiding Principles"

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15. (C) To overcome these three barriers, Liang said, China and the United States had to do two things. First, China proposed negotiating a set of guiding principles for mil-mil relations. Liang noted that in recent years bilateral military relations had been "trapped in a circle of mil-mil making progress for a few years then suspension of ties...making progress again, then suspension," in which some incident or arms sale would require one side or the other to suspend military exchanges and dialogue. Liang said that a set of guiding principles making clear that bilateral military cooperation would be based on mutual respect, mutual trust, equality and mutual benefit might help break out of the circle. Secondly, Liang said, "all obstacles and barriers," such as arms sales to Taiwan, the NDAA and surveillance activity in China's EEZ, had to be removed. Liang said that, absent the removal of

these "barriers," he "doubted where the mil-mil relationship might go." Liang asked for the CODEL's assistance in improving mil-mil relations.

#### Senator McCain Responds

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¶6. (C) Noting our fundamental differences over freedom of navigation and our responsibilities to Taiwan, Senator McCain told Liang that more dialogue was needed. He urged Liang to visit Washington to meet with Secretary Gates and to meet with Senators to discuss mil-mil issues.

#### DPRK Rocket Launch

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¶7. (C) In response to Senator McCain's query about the recent DPRK rocket launch, Liang acknowledged China's concern over the launch but urged caution and the need to verify whether the North Korean rocket launched a satellite or not. Liang said that China sought stability on the Korean Peninsula and admitted the launch had "had an impact on China's national security." Nonetheless, he said, China was committed to the Six-Party Talks as the best mechanism to handle the situation.

#### PLA Navy Deployment

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¶8. (C) Turning to the PLAN anti-piracy deployment to the Gulf of Aden, Liang agreed with Senator McCain that the deployment presented an opportunity to improve mil-mil ties and said China "looked

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positively at closer cooperation with the U.S. Navy and others." Liang suggested that the PLA would be willing to explore cooperation in humanitarian assistance activities with U.S. counterparts.

#### Afghanistan and Pakistan

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¶9. (C) While noting the "complex and destabilized" situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan and underscoring China's opposition to all forms of terrorist attacks, Liang urged the international community to not only address terrorist acts but their root causes.

¶10. (U) The delegation did not have an opportunity to clear this cable.

WEINSTEIN